

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. Flexible gap covering assembly disposable in use between an adjustable steering column of a motor vehicle and an instrument panel, the gap covering assembly, on one side, being fastened to a steering column covering and, on the other side, being fastened to the instrument panel,

wherein the flexible gap covering assembly comprises an upper covering and a lower covering,

wherein the upper covering comprises two parts which are arranged above one another and are fixedly connected with one another in a joint overlapping area, and

wherein at least one tensioning element is applied to the joint overlapping area on a side facing away from a vehicle occupant compartment when installed in a motor vehicle.

2. Flexible gap covering assembly according to Claim 1, wherein the upper covering is fastened to a transversely extending bridge of the instrument panel and to an upper shell of the steering column covering.

3. Flexible gap covering assembly according to Claim 1, wherein the lower covering is held in position on a lower shell of the steering column covering and on an instrument panel bottom part.

4. Flexible gap covering assembly according to Claim 1, wherein the two parts of the upper covering are mutually sewn together and/or glued together in the joint overlapping area.

5. Flexible gap covering assembly according to Claim 1, wherein one end of the tensioning element is connected to the joint overlapping area of the upper covering, and

wherein the other end of the tensioning element is detachably fastened to a free end of a holding arm extending at a distance from the fastening area of the upper covering.

6. Flexible gap covering assembly according to Claim 2, wherein one end of the tensioning element is connected to the joint overlapping area of the upper covering, and

wherein the other end of the tensioning element is detachably fastened to a free end of a holding arm extending at a distance from the fastening area of the upper covering.

7. Flexible gap covering assembly according to Claim 4, wherein one end of the tensioning element is connected to the joint overlapping area of the upper covering, and

wherein the other end of the tensioning element is detachably fastened to a free end of a holding arm extending at a distance from the fastening area of the upper covering.

8. Flexible gap covering assembly according to Claim 1, wherein the at least one tensioning element is formed by a flexible rubber band.

9. Flexible gap covering assembly according to Claim 2, wherein the at least one tensioning element is formed by a flexible rubber band.

10. Flexible gap covering assembly according to Claim 3, wherein the at least one tensioning element is formed by a flexible rubber band.

11. Flexible gap covering assembly according to Claim 4, wherein the at least one tensioning element is formed by a flexible rubber band.

12. Flexible gap covering assembly according to Claim 5, wherein the at least one tensioning element is formed by a flexible rubber band.

13. Flexible gap covering assembly according to Claim 1, wherein the at least one tensioning element includes at least two tensioning elements, which, viewed in a transverse direction, are arranged at a distance from one another and are applied to the upper covering.

14. Flexible gap covering assembly according to Claim 6, wherein the at least one holding arm is constructed in one piece with the bridge.

15. Flexible gap covering assembly according to Claim 14, wherein each holding arm has a downward-projecting hook molded to its free end, into which hook an edge area of the tensioning element can be hung which is provided with an opening.

16. Flexible gap covering assembly according to one Claim 1, wherein, when the steering column is swivelled up and has not moved out, the two parts of the upper covering are situated directly above one another in areas and are tensioned by the at least one tensioning element.

17. Flexible gap covering assembly according to Claim 1, wherein, when the steering column is lowered or has moved out toward the driver, the two parts of the upper covering extend at an angle  $\alpha$  with respect to one another, and

wherein the two parts of the upper covering take up an approximately prolate tensioned position as a result of the at least one tensioning element.

18. Flexible gap covering assembly according to Claim 16, wherein, when the steering column is lowered or has moved out toward the driver, the two parts of the upper covering extend at an angle  $\alpha$  with respect to one another, and

wherein the two parts of the upper covering take up an approximately prolate tensioned position as a result of the at least one tensioning element.

19. A flexible gap covering operable to cover a gap between a vehicle instrument panel and an adjustable steering column protruding into a vehicle occupant space from said instrument panel, said flexible gap covering comprising an upper covering portion which in use is disposed above a vehicle steering column, said upper covering portion being formed of two flexible parts arranged above one another and connected together in an overlapping joint area, and

wherein at least one tensioning element is applied to the overlapping joint area to apply tension to thereby maintain a visually attractive low-wrinkle appearance of said flexible gap covering during adjusting movements of the steering column.

20. A flexible gap covering according to Claim 19, wherein said at least one tensioning element includes a rubber band.

21. A method of making a flexible gap covering according to Claim 19, said method comprising sewing the two flexible parts together along said overlapping joint area.

22. A method of making a flexible gap covering according to Claim 19, said method comprising gluing the two flexible parts together along said overlapping joint area.